

Request for Proposals

Café Operator

Citadel Theatre – Main Lobby Coffee Shop

9828 101A AVE
Edmonton, Alberta

1. Opportunity

The Citadel Theatre invites proposals from experienced café operators to lease and operate the coffee kiosk/shop located in the theatre's Main Lobby.

The Citadel Theatre is Canada's largest non-profit regional theatre and one of Edmonton's premier cultural destinations. Welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, the building is home to:

- Five performance venues
- The Foote Theatre School
- Community events and festivals
- Corporate rentals
- Meetings and conferences
- Daily staff, visitors, and volunteers
- Artists from across Canada and internationally

We are seeking an operator who will create a vibrant and welcoming hospitality experience - one that complements the Citadel, enhances the visitor experience, and establishes the café as a destination in its own right.

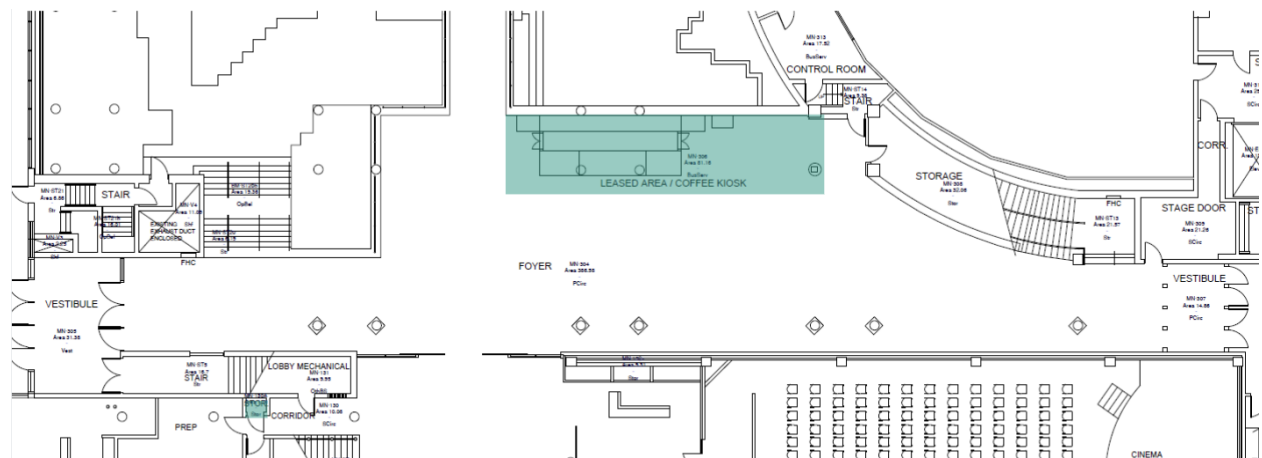
2. About the Space

The Citadel Theatre is located in the heart of downtown Edmonton in the Arts District. The facility includes access to the downtown pedway system, which crosses through the café space adding to the foot traffic and exposure of the coffee shop.

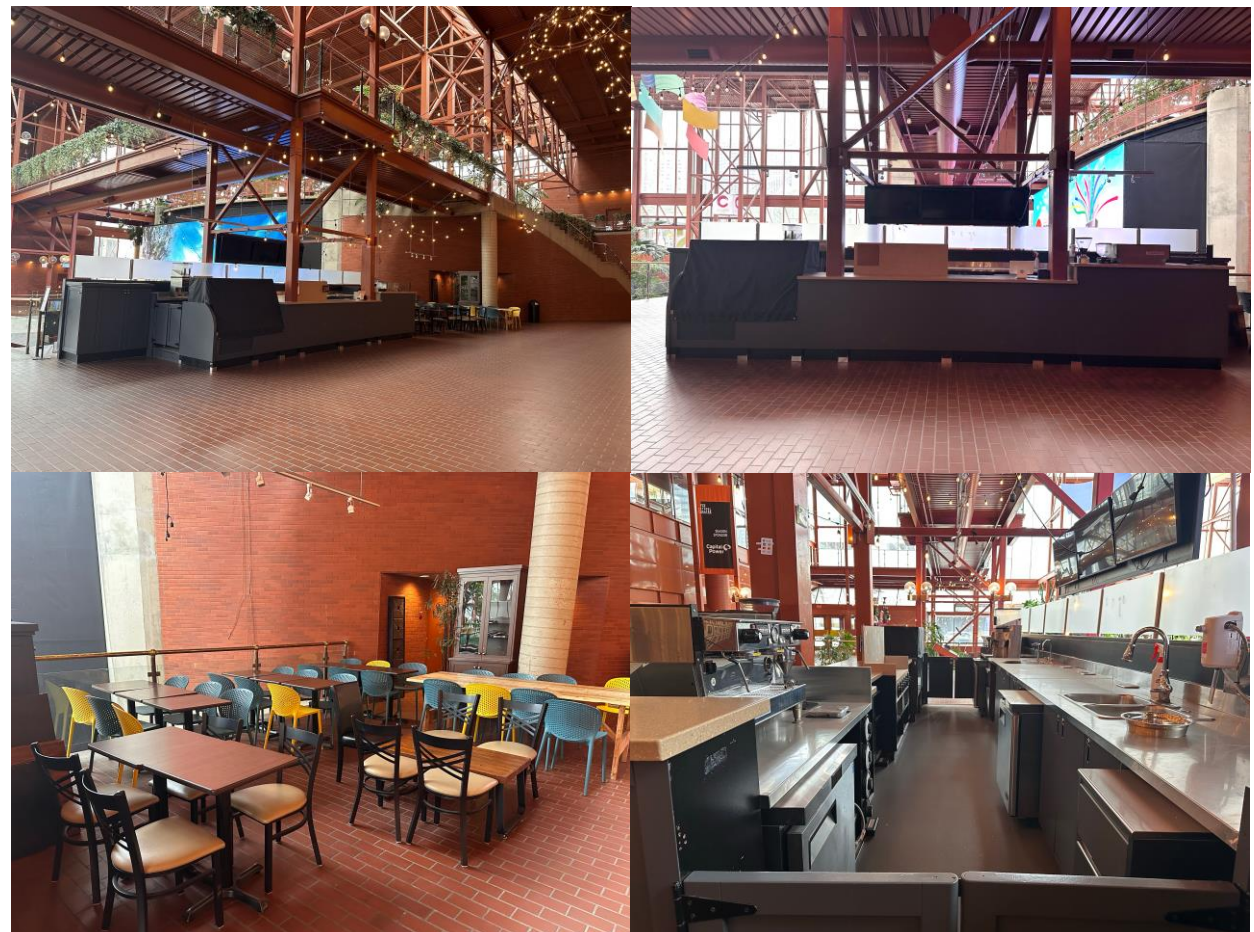
Details:

- Approximate square footage: four hundred (400) square feet, access to common areas.
- Existing equipment included: La Marzocco espresso machine, three Atosa under counter fridges, Eureka coffee grinders, water filtration system, and three Philips TVs.
- Seating areas: Adjacent seating area, seats approx. 30. Building features a multilevel atrium with additional tables and chairs on the upper level in close proximity.
- Storage: Storage cabinets throughout the kiosk, plus an additional storage closet on the same level.
- Utilities: Fixed, inclusive of operating costs, property tax, and equipment rental totalling approx. \$1,400 per month.
- Loading access: No dedicated parking, loading zones located near the various building entrances. Keys provided for after hours access.
- Garbage/Recycling: Bins located in garage, access key provided.
- Building Hours: 7 AM to 6 PM, extended hours during performances and activations.
- Existing infrastructure: Sales counter, storage cabinets, built in display cooler, hot water tank, grease trap, sinks, water dispenser.
- Outdoor opportunities (if any): None.

FLOORPLAN



PHOTOS





3. Desired Vision

We are looking for a long-term hospitality partner who will:

- Operate a high-quality coffee shop with light food service.
- Reflect Edmonton's creativity, hospitality, and entrepreneurial spirit.
- Create an inviting atmosphere for theatre patrons and the broader community.
- Welcome students, artists, families, tourists, downtown workers, and building users with excellent quality and affordable pricing.
- Support efficient and welcoming pre-show, intermission, and post-show service.
- Be open during regular daytime business hours and responsive to the activity of the building.
- Deliver excellent, thoughtful, and accessible customer service.
- Contribute to the vibrancy of the Citadel, the Arts District, and downtown Edmonton.
- Work collaboratively with the Citadel and other building and community partners.

The successful operator will have the opportunity to build a café space that is more than a convenient amenity: a place where people want to meet, linger, return, and feel welcome, and that contributes to the Citadel's role as a gathering place in Edmonton's Arts District.

4. Preferred Offerings

Examples include:

- Coffee and espresso beverages
- Specialty teas
- Canned/Bottled beverages (including bottled water)
- Dirty sodas
- Packaged food (sweet and savory)
- Fresh food (prepared elsewhere)
 - Baked goods
 - Grab-and-go breakfast
 - Sandwiches
 - Salads
- Gluten-free and vegan offerings
- Catering services for meetings and events (asset)
- Themed offerings related to Citadel Theatre programming

5. Hours of Operation

Minimum expectations:

- Monday-Friday daytime service from 7 AM to 5 PM.
- Weekend daytime service not required.
- Extended hours during performances, weekend daytimes from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM, weekday and weekend evenings from 6 PM to 9:30 PM.
- Flexibility during festivals and special events such as New Year's Eve.

Operators may propose expanded hours.

6. Target Customers

The successful proponent should demonstrate how they will serve:

- Downtown office workers
- Theatre patrons
- Citadel staff and volunteers
- Rental clients
- Theatre artists
- Foote Theatre School families
- Students
- Tourists
- Community members

7. Lease Information

Current rental framework: The anticipated base rent is approximately \$30 per square foot per annum. Additional rent includes operating costs currently estimated at approximately \$205 per month, property taxes at \$186 per month, and equipment rental at \$1,000 per month. These figures are provided for planning purposes and are subject to confirmation and negotiation as part of the lease process.

The successful proponent will enter into a commercial lease agreement with the Citadel Theatre. The lease structure and terms will be discussed and negotiated with the successful proponent and will reflect the nature and requirements of the proposed coffee shop operation. Areas for discussion will include the initial lease term and any renewal options, rent structure, operating costs and utilities, maintenance and repair responsibilities, insurance requirements, security deposit, tenant improvements, and signage permissions. The parties will work together to establish terms that are appropriate for the space, the proposed operation, and the respective responsibilities of the landlord and tenant.

All final lease terms and conditions are subject to negotiation, execution of a mutually acceptable lease agreement, and final approval by the City of Edmonton, as head lease holder and building owner.

8. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

Company Profile

- History
- Owner
- Years in operation

- Current locations (preference will be given to a hospitality group or operator with successful multiple location experience)
- Mission and values
- Relevant information about the ownership and leadership team

Operating Experience

- Relevant café, restaurant, or hospitality experience
- Comparable locations and operating environments
- Experience operating in cultural venues, public facilities, or other high-volume environments
- Experience managing concentrated periods of high customer demand
- Experience managing multiple locations, where applicable

Café Concept

Describe:

- Brand and concept, including proposed name
- Menu and service model
- Pricing
- Customer experience
- Design vision, including physical space, staff uniforms or dress code
- Sustainability initiatives, if applicable
- Approach to creating a welcoming and distinctive café experience
- How the concept will complement the Citadel and the broader Arts District

Operations Plan

Describe the proposed high-level approach to:

- Hours of operation
- Staffing levels and scheduling
- Management and on-site supervision
- Food sourcing
- Cleaning
- Waste reduction
- Inventory management
- Equipment and operational requirements
- Food safety and regulatory compliance

Marketing

How will you attract and retain

- Daily or repeat customers
- Downtown workers
- Theatre audiences
- Students and families
- Event and meeting clients
- Artists, staff, and volunteers

Include examples of past or proposed promotions, partnerships, community engagement, or cross-promotion opportunities. Proposals may also identify proposed staff, volunteer, artist, or subscriber benefits and discounts.

Financial Proposal

Include:

- Proposed rent
- Proposed revenue-sharing structure, if applicable
- Capital investment
- Anticipated operating costs
- Sales projections
- Demonstrated financial capacity to operate and sustain the proposed business
- Any other financial considerations relevant to the proposed operation

References

Minimum three references, including at least one current or former staff member who can speak to your management and workplace practices. References may be contacted regarding the proponent's approach to kindness and respect, accountability, inclusion and accessibility, communication, collaboration, and creating a respectful and welcoming workplace and community gathering space.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the overall strength and viability of the proposed café concept, the proponent's relevant experience and operational capacity, customer experience, values and culture, financial viability, and potential to contribute positively to the Citadel, Arts District, and broader community.

Criteria	Weight
Café concept and vision	20%
Relevant experience and capacity	20%
Customer experience and peak-period service	15%
Values, culture, and partnership fit	15%
Financial strength and proposal	15%
Marketing	10%
Community engagement	5%
Total	100%

10. Timeline

- Proposal closing: September 14, 2026
- Interviews: September 21 – 28, 2026
- Preferred proposal selected: October 1, 2026
- Lease negotiations: October-November 2026
- Opening date: January 2027

11. Submission Instructions

Include:

- Submit proposal as PDF format (file name: Citadel – 2026 Coffee RFP – INSERT NAME.pdf) to executivesupport@citadeltheatre.com
- Contact person: Trinity Locke (executivesupport@citadeltheatre.com)

12. Why the Citadel?

The successful café operator will become part of one of Canada's leading cultural organizations and one of Edmonton's most distinctive gathering places.

The Citadel is more than a theatre. It is a home for artists, students, audiences, staff, volunteers, community members, and visitors from across Edmonton, Alberta, and Canada. Located in Edmonton's Arts District and connected to the downtown pedway system, the Citadel is a place where people come together throughout the day and throughout the year.

The café has the opportunity to serve:

- Annual building visitors at hundreds of performances and events annually (250,000+ people per year)
- Approximately 1,000 Foote Theatre School students and their families each year
- Artists, creative teams, and production personnel
- Corporate meetings, conferences, and rental clients
- Community events and festivals
- Downtown professionals and neighbouring businesses
- Theatre patrons and subscribers
- Visitors from across Alberta and Canada
- Citadel staff and volunteers

The Citadel is part of a vibrant concentration of cultural, civic, and commercial activity in Edmonton's downtown core. Our immediate and nearby neighbours include:

- Francis Winspear Centre for Music
- Art Gallery of Alberta
- Stanley A. Milner Library
- Edmonton Convention Centre
- Sun Life Place
- Canada Place
- Churchill Square
- Edmonton City Hall
- Downtown office towers and businesses
- Hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality operators
- Other arts, cultural, and community organizations

We are seeking a long-term partner who shares our commitment to community, creativity, accessibility, kindness, and exceptional hospitality.

The successful operator will have the opportunity to create something distinctive: a café that serves Citadel audiences, artists, staff, and the broader community while becoming a destination in its own right. A place to meet before a show, grab a coffee on the way to work, gather with friends, connect with community, or simply spend time in the heart of downtown Edmonton.

We are looking for an operator who sees hospitality as more than a transaction—someone who is excited to become part of the Citadel community and contribute to the experience, energy, and vibrancy of the Citadel and Edmonton's Arts District.